



"LEE TO THE REAR" THE 49TH VA. REG

Where It Was and What It Did on a Memorable Day.

THE TWELFTH OF MAY, 1864

Colonel C. B. Christian's Account of the Events of a Fateful Day.

On the evening before the capture of a portion of Johnson's Division, the enemy made a desperate assault on our lines just to the left of that acute angle, known in history as the "Bloody Angle," and we were rushed up to their support, but the enemy had been repulsed when we arrived, so we rested on our arms just in rear of the works with our right, the Forty-ninth posted just opposite the mouth of this very acute angle, and close to it. To the right of this sharp angle there were "cross traverses."

The morning of the 12th was as dark as night with fog. Through light I heard but a few shots and a few bulletts came by us. I then saw a few men singly running back, and in a few minutes we heard of the catastrophe.

The Fourth Brigade (Pigram's or Ely's Division), now commanded by General Gordon—General Early in command of Hill's Corps was moved to the right and formed to charge the captured works, but the enemy still extending their capture of our lines to our right, the Fourth Virginia Brigade, the Forty-ninth at its head, was extended still further to the right, so as to drive back the enemy's extreme left in our works, and some other troops brought forward formed on our left filling in the gap left behind.

GENERAL LEE APPEARS. When our lines were ready to charge General Lee, coming up the line, reached the Forty-ninth waiting for orders to charge. He looked deeply moved, as I never saw him before, fully recognizing the fact that our army was cut in two, and unless our works were retaken all was lost. He said: "Men, these people must be driven back! Will you do it?" The men went frantic. There was a general cry, "Go back! Go back! We will drive them till we will give them hell!" and a variety of other forcible expressions. Then he said: "I will be your leader!" and made a move forward. Upon this the cry went up, "Go back! Go back! Go back and charge."

THE MEN URGE GENERAL LEE TO GO BACK AND CHARGE. Instantly quite a little squad rushed from his bridge to lead him to the rear, among whom were Charles Burks, of Norwood; Lieutenant Kyle Christian, of Nelson, and Herrod Tyree, of Amherst county, and some one or more from the "Warren Blues." Captain Funkhouser's company.

Just at this time, taking what General Lee said as permission to charge, I gave the order, "Forward! Doubtful quick! March!" and the men dashed forward, yelling like Comanche Indians and dashed over the works without any check with a very small loss. When we mounted the parapet the enemy were standing at an "order arms," as if they considered themselves captured, and did not fire after we go within forty feet of them, seeming to be surprised. But the Forty-ninth did not seem inclined to "give quarter" and the enemy broke in a body and ran at full speed. General Gordon neither led nor followed the Forty-ninth, as has been said. If he was anywhere about he was not seen with us after we started in the fight. General Lee was the last general I saw or heard from that day.

THE CONFEDERATES PURSUE THE ENEMY BEYOND THE WORKS. The Forty-ninth made no stop at the breastworks. The enemy retreated diagonally to their right through an open old field to their lines. The Forty-ninth, with a portion of the Thirty-first, without any field officers, followed close behind until we came near their works, where, with some difficulty between us, we stayed and fired until our load was heavy. And seeing all of the other regiments had already stopped in the works, I, by signal, "about faced" the remnant and "double quicked" it back to the trenches at the nearest point, which was near the angle where the enemy first broke through. And as soon as we had gotten in the works they advanced out in the open, where all our men opened fire and drove them to the cover of the pines.

There was desultory firing there almost all day, though the enemy made no serious effort to carry the works again.

THE GENTLEMAN ABIDES. The Forty-ninth had evidently need six regiments of cartridges early in the day, so I had to make Tullahoma Thompson, of Amherst county, run the gauntlet of death to bring a box of cartridges, which he did gallantly. At about 2 P.M. the right and left of our army were thrown out of our works against the enemy, and I never heard such a roar of musketry in any battle of the war. No man, whether Virginian or otherwise, was moved out and forward, as we in the center were already in advance of the two wings. This move it carried on caused our main force in the center to be taken off, and the Major Pittman, staff officer, told General Lee that the Fourth Virginia Brigade had gone out of the trenches and advanced against the enemy, and that he recommended that the Fourth Virginia immediately give the order for the right and left wings to advance. I do not know that this was so, but it looked like cause and effect.

THE BRIGADE IN BORDEAUX RECAPTURED. The brigade, together with the char-

FIELD OFFICERS OF CONFEDERACY

List of Brave Virginians Who Commanded Brave Virginians in Days of War.

HISTORY BY MAJOR HUNTER

Continuation of List of Field Officers as They Started Out to War.

The following is a continuation of the field officers who started out in command of Virginia veterans as prepared for publication by Major R. W. Hunter, secretary of Virginia Military Records. This chapter closes the record so far as Infantry regiments are concerned. Next Sunday's record will tell of the cavalry branch of the service.

FIFTY-NINTH INFANTRY REGIMENT.

Wm. B. Tabb, colonel.

Chas. F. Hennington, colonel.

Frank P. Anderson, lieutenant colonel.

Joseph Jones, lieutenant colonel.

John Samson, major.

Robert G. Mosby, major.

SIXTIETH INFANTRY REGIMENT.

Wm. E. Stark, colonel.

Beulering II. Jones, lieutenant colonel.

James L. Corley, lieutenant colonel.

Wm. A. Gilliam, lieutenant colonel.

Geo. W. Hammond, major, Lieutenant colonel.

J. W. Spaulding, Lieutenant colonel.

Joe C. Summers, major, Lieutenant colonel.

Wm. A. Swank (acting) Lieutenant colonel.

Wm. S. Rowan, major.

James W. Sweeney, major.

Jacob N. Taylor, major.

SIXTY-FIRST INFANTRY REGIMENT.

Virginia three Lieutenant-generals, and major, and brigadier-general too numerous to mention here.

I will further say, in memory of our dear friend, General Jubal A. Early, the hero of two wars, that he was the coolest and most level-headed man under fire I ever saw; could get him in position more quickly, and with less noise, than any other general ever saw. He was a man that loved and honored a brave man, who did his duty, and he detested and loathed the skulker more than any other man I ever saw. He deserves a "monument more lasting than brass."

C. B. CHRISTIAN, Lieutenant-Colonel; Forty-ninth Virginia Volunteers.

Walkers Ford, Amherst county, Va.

GENERAL LEE OFFERED TO LEAD VARIOUS COMMANDS.

I have seen from time to time accounts of the "Lee to the rear" affair, all reciting the same facts as happening in the different regiments in that line drawn to the right, all told, told the same. The fact is General Lee knew all depended upon that charge and acted the same drama before a number of regiments to inspire the men. He did it, too.

I was standing close to the center of my command, the Forty-ninth, awaiting a move of the brigade on or orders to advance. The Fourth Brigade General Lee came up within ten feet of me. I did not tell him, "I am going to go back, because I knew he had too much sense to go forward, but did reply to him, saying, "General, these men will drive them back in spite of all the powers of earth and hell combined, and they do."

The Fourth Brigade General Lee came up and encamped works all day and night, until ordered out to make a rear movement around the enemy's flank, and near where we soon found out that we were in the wrong place.

EARLY'S OLD BRIGADE AND GENERAL EARLY.

In conclusion I will say that the gallant achievements of Early's Old Fourth Brigade are fully attested by the fact that it made and furnished to the army of Northern Virginia three Lieutenant-generals, and major, and brigadier-general too numerous to mention here.

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